

## Comments on Ending Morse Code Requirement

As a licensed Amateur Radio Operator since 1994, I feel obligated to weigh in on the current discussion or whether Morse Code should be dropped as a requirement for operation below 30 Mhz.

Many national and international organizations have taken up the call to eliminate this requirement and I must agree with them. While I understand that the some segments of Amateur Radio may not want this requirement lifted due to their fear that our hobby will somehow be harmed, I can't agree with their logic. The addition of the No-Code Tech class in our hobby has generated an influx of very competent operators that have not polluted the spectrum with uncouth or uneducated people. I feel the technical knowledge required to pass licensing exams will keep the caliber of operators on Amateur Radio up to the high standards everyone wants and expects. Should the occasional person filter through who refuses to live up to these high operational standards, I believe the Amateur Radio community as a whole is up to the challenge of self-policing these potential "bad boys".

I do feel however that the requirement that Morse Code be learned to access spectrum portions below 30 Mhz is hurting our hobby by keeping some people out. While I enjoy greatly my privileges on 2-meters and 70 cm, I did not become an Amateur just to be confined to a small portion of the band. I understood that I would have to live with this limit in the beginning but my participation in ARRL Field Day and other events where I was allowed to operate on other frequencies under the supervision of a control operator has made me hunger for more access. I understood that the code would be a challenge, but as it turns out, it is more of a challenge than I expected. Before the addition of the "no-code" classification, I didn't even give thought to becoming a ham. The addition of the "no-code" classification drew me into the hobby and I believe the elimination of the code requirement will provide another influx of highly competent Amateurs.

I am not advocating the removal of "code only" portions of the bands. Far from that as a matter of fact. I believe that Morse Code still has a vital role to play in Amateur Radio. There may be some times when noise and interference are so much a problem that Morse Code may be the only signal that can be copied. I also believe that amateurs who have taken the time and had the focus to learn the code should be rewarded for their fortitude by having a portion of the spectrum dedicated to their operation as long as usage continues to stay high. I applaud them for their determination and hope that sometime I may be able to join them.

I have tried to learn the code on many occasions with no luck. I am ready and willing to put in the study it takes to learn the technical data needed to advance but the code seems to be impossible for me to get. I don't feel I should be limited in my access to other portions of the band just because I can't seem to learn a mode of communications that I will never use and frankly, the majority of those who have learned it in the past don't use either. I can justify not using any "code only" band portions but that shouldn't include all frequencies below 30 Mhz in my estimation.

In my home state of Indiana, motorcyclists must have a special driver's license endorsement in

order to ride their bikes on the streets. Does it make more sense to exclude all drivers from some streets just because they didn't have the motorcycle endorsement or just to exclude those drivers who have not passed the motorcycle endorsement test from riding motorcycles? This may be a crude analogy, but it suggests a compromise. Give code-qualified operators a special endorsement on their licenses and a place where they can practice their art. I am not suggesting that code should be excluded from voice portions of the band, but the opposite.

It is sad but true that many of today's school children cannot tell the time of day by reading the hands on a conventional clock. If it's not digital they can't read it and don't have the desire to learn the art. Should we stop putting digital clocks in schools in order to force those kids to learn to read old fashioned clocks? Another crude analogy, but something to consider.

I believe that one of the great services that Amateur Radio can do for the country as a whole is communications during emergency situations. No where was that more evident than during the 9/11 attacks. Amateur Radio played a vital role during those dark hours, much of it on the 2-meter band. I wonder how many of those patriotic volunteers during that crisis were no-code operators, or "90 day wonders" as some have called us? What would have happened if those people had not been able to get licenses because of a requirement that they learn a mode of communication that is way past it's prime?

People and organizations all over the world are coming to the conclusion that requiring future operators in our hobby to learn this outmoded operation method is no longer in the best interest of the future expansion of Amateur Radio. I urge you to see the logic in this argument and drop the Morse Code requirement. Keep the "code only" portions of the band as long as there is utilization but don't exclude me and other eager hams from expanding our Amateur Radio frontiers.

Respectfully submitted  
Robert A. Ervin  
N9YFW  
rervin55@msn.com